

REMARKS:

The following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Action issued on February 22, 2008. Claims 1-21 have been allowed and claims 24-28 were withdrawn. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 1-21 and 29 are pending.

Claim 29 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ginsburg in view of McDowell et al. Claim 29 recites "means for preventing inflow to the collection container." Claim 29 also recites "a supply liquid barrier located in the supply line after each liquid inlet that is gas-permeable in dry condition and becomes permeable to liquids after contact with the liquid and after a defined pressure difference thereover is exceeded and on the basis of wetting resistances." The pending Office Action acknowledged that Ginsburg does not disclose or suggest a gas permeable liquid barrier. McDowell fails to cure this deficiency. The pending Office Action cited Figure elements 13 and 31 of McDowell as disclosing a gas permeable liquid barrier. However, McDowell is directed at removing particulates from aerosols. McDowell, col. 1, ll. 9-10. Element 13 is an impingement target, which "directs the particle-laden liquid or sol which drips from the plate surface 13 to a liquid-collecting chamber 21." (Emphasis in original) McDowell, col. 2, ll. 23-26. Similarly, element 31 is shown in Figure 2 which "operates in the same manner as described above with reference to Fig. 1." (Emphasis in original) McDowell, col. 2, ll. 53-54. The impingement plate, element 31, performs the same function as the impingement plate of element 13. McDowell does not disclose or suggest the gas permeable liquid barrier, because, at the least, neither the impingement target nor the impingement plate change their liquid

permeability on the basis of either pressure differences or wetting resistances, whereas the claim requires both. Accordingly, claim 29 is allowable over the prior art.

Applicants submit that in light of the above arguments, the restriction requirement should be withdrawn as improper, and claims 24-28 should be rejoined. MPEP 809 and 821.04.

In light of the foregoing, Applicants submit that all outstanding rejections have been overcome, and the instant application is in condition for allowance. Thus, Applicants respectfully request early allowance of the instant application. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2135.

Respectfully submitted,

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